

The principles of this invention having been fully explained in connection with the foregoing, we hereby claim as our invention:

1. An improved free-flowing dry food composition to be reconstituted into a yogurt-like product by mixing with liquid comprising

5 from about 0.005 to 10% by weight of at least one yogurt producing bacteria;

from about 0.05 to 20% by weight of a viscosity control agent selected from the group consisting of a gum or a mixture of gums;

10 from about 4 to 60% by weight of a cold water swelling starch extracted from cereals selected from the group consisting of maize or corn, wheat or rice, or from roots or tubers selected from the group consisting of tapioca and potato, and mixtures thereof;

15 sufficient edible acid to produce a pH of from about 3.7 to 4.7;

from about 10 to 90% by weight of a sweetener;

from about 0.1 to 25% by weight of at least one flavoring agent;

and

from about 0.1 to 3% by weight of an edible salt.

2. The improved composition of claim 1 wherein the yogurt producing bacteria is selected from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *Streptococcus thermophilus*, *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, and mixtures thereof.

5 3. The improved composition of claim 1 wherein the acid is selected from the group consisting of citric acid, malic acid, whey acid, lactic acid and mixtures thereof.

4. The improved composition of claim 1 wherein the composition additionally includes from about 0.5 to 35% by weight of a prebiotic carbohydrate.

10 5. The improved composition of claim 4 wherein the prebiotic carbohydrate is selected from the group consisting of a short chain fructooligosaccharide, a long chain fructooligosaccharide, oligofructose, and mixtures thereof.

15 6. The improved composition of claim 5 wherein the long chain fructooligosaccharide is inulin.

7. The improved composition of claim 1 wherein the composition additionally includes not more than 5% by weight of additional additives from the group consisting of buffering agents, vitamins, minerals, artificial sweeteners, artificial colorants, dietary fibers, appetite suppressants,

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lactose, desiccants, preservatives, dry milk materials, dry milk replacers, and mixtures thereof.

8. The improved composition of claim 1 wherein reconstitution of the composition is accomplished by hand shaking of the composition with the liquid.

9. The improved composition of claim 8 wherein the liquid is milk.

10. The improved composition of claim 1 wherein the composition is pre-packaged within a single package.

11. The improved composition of claim 10 wherein the package is sealed to provide long shelf life of the composition.

12. The improved composition of claim 1 wherein the composition additionally includes from about 1 to 80% by weight of a dry material selected from the group consisting of dairy milk products, non-dairy milk products, milk replacers and mixtures thereof.

13. The improved composition of claim 12 wherein reconstitution of the composition is accomplished by hand shaking of the composition with the liquid.

14. The improved composition of claim 13 wherein the liquid is water.

15. The improved composition of claim 12 wherein the composition is pre-packaged as the contents of a single package.

16. The improved composition of claim 15 wherein reconstitution of the composition is accomplished by mixing the contents of the package with the liquid and by hand shaking thereof.

17. The improved composition of claim 16 wherein the liquid is water.

18. The improved composition of claim 15 wherein the package is sealed to provide long shelf life of the contents.

19. The improved composition of claim 12 wherein that portion of the composition comprising at least one yogurt producing bacteria, a viscosity control agent, a cold water swelling starch, an edible acid, a sweetener, at least one flavoring agent, and an edible salt is pre-packaged as the contents of a first package and that portion of the composition comprising the dry milk or milk replacers is pre-packaged as the contents of a second package.

20. The improved composition of claim 19 wherein reconstitution of the composition is accomplished by mixing the contents of the second package with the liquid and by hand shaking thereof, and by then mixing

the contents of the first package therewith and by continued hand shaking thereof.

21. The improved composition of claim 20 wherein the first and second packages are sealed to provide long shelf life of the contents of each package.

22. The improved composition of claim 21 wherein the liquid is water.

23. The improved composition of claim 1 wherein the dry food composition is reconstituted into an instant yogurt drink.

24. The improved composition of claim 1 wherein the dry food composition is reconstituted into an instant yogurt pie filling.